



the collegian GAMEDAY GUIDE

friday, november 2, 2012

K-STATE VS. OSU
Kickoff at 7 p.m., Bill Snyder Family Stadium



2
Defense focuses on fundamentally sound play



3
Collin Klein continues rise to top of Heisman race



5
Matching up: Wildcats look to stop John Randle

By the numbers

John Zetmeir
staff writer

2 *K-State's current ranking in the 2012 BCS standings*

The Wildcats are one of four undefeated teams atop the BCS entering the weekend. Oklahoma State was in a similar position last season. The Cowboys, who were No. 3 at this point in the season in 2011, rose to as high as No. 2 before an upset loss at Iowa State in the second-to-last game of the season dropped them out of contention for a trip to the BCS title game. OSU looks for a chance to play spoiler themselves this season as they head into Manhattan.

3 *The number of sacks allowed by the Oklahoma State offensive in 2012*

No team in the Big 12 Conference protects its quarterbacks like the Cowboys, and this is saying something considering that two freshmen have taken nearly every snap this season. Much of K-State's defensive success has been based on their ability to disrupt opposing quarterbacks. Which team wins this battle could go a long way toward the outcome this weekend.

4 *The number of native Kansans on the Oklahoma State roster*

This number includes preseason All-Big 12 back Joseph Randle. Randle's 127 rushing yards per game lead the conference, and he has scored nine touchdowns thus far this season. Randle picked up 104 yards of total offense and three touchdowns in the Cowboys' 52-45 win over K-State in Stillwater, Okla., last year.

25 *The average number of points that K-State has scored in the second half of games this season*

The Wildcats have let a few opponents hang around in the first half, especially at home in Bill Snyder Family Stadium. Visitors Missouri State, North Texas, Kansas and Texas Tech were all within a touchdown of K-State heading into the third quarter of their respective ballgames against the Wildcats but were unable to keep pace in the second half, as K-State won each of those ballgames by an average of 33.5 points.

81 *Collin Klein's completion percentage in K-State last two games*

Klein has been showcasing an arm that many pundits may not believe he possessed in the last couple of games. In that time, he is 38-of-47 for 556 yards and five touchdowns. Oklahoma State is adequate defensively against the pass, allowing opposing quarterbacks just a 56 percent completion rate in 2012, but they rarely nab interceptions. Their six interceptions this season are second-worst in the Big 12.

239 *The Cowboys' average per-game rushing yards in 2012*

Outside of Oklahoma, K-State hasn't seen an offense that can run the ball anywhere near as effectively as the Cowboys have this season. OSU is the best in the conference at both yards per game and yards per carry (5.6) this year, which provides a balance that many of the other high-flying offenses in the Big 12 simply don't possess.

Zimmerman: from QB to star safety



Tommy Theis | Collegian
Junior defensive back Ty Zimmerman celebrates a Wildcat turnover and first down after senior defensive back Nigel Malone grabbed an interception from the Mean Green of North Texas in Bill Snyder Family Stadium on Sept. 15.

John Zetmeir
staff writer

After leading Junction City High School to an undefeated record and a state championship as both the quarterback and defensive back his senior season, Ty Zimmerman decided that he would take his talents to K-State. Zimmerman initially took the field as a quarterback, but head coach Bill Snyder had a different plan for the youngster. Zimmerman didn't even have enough time to take off the green jersey that quarterbacks wear during practice before he was lined up on defense. "The first day they shifted him over to defense, he still had the green jersey. That's how I remember how fresh the transition was," said senior quarterback Collin Klein. "I remember even on the first day just being like wow, he really sees the field and reacted quickly." Zimmerman not only shined on the practice field, but emerged as one of K-State's

best players on the defensive side of the ball in his freshman year. Starting in 12 of K-State's 13 games of the 2010 season, Zimmerman was pegged as a freshman All-American. "Probably the physicality part, coming from the offensive side as a quarterback, you don't get hit that much" said Zimmerman about the toughest part of the transition to defense. "The coach, at the time, came up to me and asked me to make the switch and I did." In his first two years as a starter, Zimmerman played alongside current Kansas City Chief and former K-State defensive back Tysyn Hartman, another quarterback who transitioned to the safety position. "He caught on a little faster than I did," Hartman said. "He's an outstanding tackler and plays the ball well in the air." It should come to no surprise that Zimmerman is not the first K-State player that coach Snyder has moved from offense to defense. He actually appears to be a fan of it. "There is a variety of different positions that you'd like

to have quarterbacks," Snyder said. "Coming from the offensive side of the ball to the defense, you have a better understanding, particularly at [safety]. You have a much better understanding of what offenses do and what they are trying to do and how they go about doing it." Last spring, Zimmerman was named as a co-defensive captain going into the 2012 season. "I wasn't surprised at all," Hartman said of Zimmerman's being named co-captain. "Knowing the type of person that he is and his character. Combined with his play on the field, I know he'd be the perfect guy for captain." Through the first eight games of the 2012 season, K-State's defense has allowed only 17.1 points per game, and Zimmerman's play at safety has been a major factor. In his first four Big 12 games of the season, Zimmerman averaged one interception per game and added a fumble recovery. "He's obviously a great athlete and a great leader for our

team and just his presence is definitely comforting back there," said senior linebacker Arthur Brown. Brown also praised Zimmerman's "ability to make plays and, even as a safety, being able to come down and stuff the run." With nine career interceptions under his belt, Zimmerman is on track to tie, or even break the school record of 15 held by former K-State All-American Jaime Mendez. Mendez played for the Wildcats from 1990-1993 and is enshrined in K-State's Ring of Honor. "Both of them are instinctive players," Snyder said. "Jaime had a great feel for the game. I think Ty has a very positive feel for the game as well — not just from their position standpoint, but a collective vision of both offense and defense. Both of them were good leaders in terms of being able to give guidance and direction to their teammates on the field, and both of them are young guys that worked hard and did everything right."

Wildcats' play shows balanced strength in all facets

Adam Suderman
staff writer

The book of descriptions that fans, players, coaches and analysts have used regarding the Wildcat offense this season contains a wide-ranging vocabulary. Whether it seems vanilla, plain, well-schemed, efficient or even "boring" to some, the execution has been there in nearly every moment of the season. It may not be eye-popping, but K-State has executed as a team in areas that have helped give them an extra push this season. Senior quarterback Collin Klein finds himself only behind Alabama's AJ McCarron in overall passing efficiency this season but doesn't fall in the NCAA top-50 rankings in passing yards. After two turnovers in nonconference play, Klein has yet to turn the ball over since taking on North Texas on Sept. 15. No quarterback would argue against a strong season statistically, but when his team can position themselves near the top in several under-appreciated categories, overall success won't be hard to come by. In the team categories of third-down conversions, overall team penalties and turnover margin, the Wildcats sit in fourth, second and fifth respectively. For a team

to be placed near the top in each of these categories, it would be and is very difficult not to succeed on a weekly basis. K-State has been able to take care of business in many facets of the game and closing games effectively is just yet another area that head coach Bill Snyder says has taken a positive impact this season. "I guess the way I can put my arms around it is we have progressed as games have gone on, whether that is getting acclimated to the opponent and what they do schematically or how they play physically," Snyder said. "It is probably a combination of both as much of anything." Strengthening the team's focus on finishing and continuing to build on areas that have been weak points previously have helped guide K-State to its No. 2 ranking. The Wildcats have been able to build a more balanced mindset that wide receiver Curry Sexton said has become much more prevalent this season. "I think last year we went into each game and, we as a team, did not have a lot of balance," Sexton said. "One week it might be the defense carrying us, and the next week it might be the offense carrying us. This year, you are kind of seeing a balance across the board in all three facets of the game."



Tommy Theis | Collegian
Junior running back John Hubert looks for a block upfield in the Wildcats' 35-21 victory over North Texas on Sept. 15 at Bill Snyder Family Stadium. Hubert has put up 722 yards and 10 touchdowns for the No. 2 K-State Wildcats this season.

Wildcats ready for explosive Cowboy attack, talented QBs

Corbin McGuire
staff writer

K-State's defensive improvement from a season ago comes from a combination of experience and a rejuvenated defensive line. The Wildcats' defense – giving up 340 yards per game, ranked 30th in the NCAA – has seemingly shut down two Heisman-level quarterbacks in back-to-back weeks. Starting with exposing Geno Smith and ending his passing attempts without an interception record, and finishing with the Wildcats slowing down Texas Tech quarterback Seth Doege, who gave the Wildcats trouble for about a quarter.

"I do not subscribe to the underdog rule. Again, if you look across this conference, there are no real underdogs. Everybody has a quality football team. Oklahoma State is as good as anybody."

Bill Snyder
Kansas State Football head coach

The defensive line has sacked the quarterback 20 times this season, only three behind last season's total. "I just have to give props to our defensive line. They have been doing a good job getting pressure on the quarterback," said linebacker Jarell Childs after the Texas Tech win. "We [the linebackers and secondary] have been doing a good job with our assignments, but the pressure has been the main thing, forcing the quarterback to get rid of the ball quickly." Saturday's game against Oklahoma State, however, may pose the Wildcats' biggest defensive challenge of the season. "I do not subscribe to the underdog rule," said head coach Bill Snyder, despite

the Wildcats being favored against the Cowboys. "Again, if you look across this conference, there are no real underdogs. Everybody has a quality football team. Oklahoma State is as good as anybody." The Cowboys come in No. 1 in the NCAA in total offense with an average of 586 yards per game. The Cowboys' offense is led by Wichita-native running back Joseph Randle who is averaging 127 rushing yards per game, ranking him ninth in the NCAA. Randle, a modern-age running back, also has 20 receptions for 154 yards this season to rank him 19th in the NCAA for all-purpose yards with 149 yards per game. "Randle is an extremely talented running back. He runs hard, but he is a smart runner," Snyder said. "He picks his lanes extremely well, and they have good depth at that position. Now that they have guys healthy again, they can give him a break when he needs it, and it makes him that much stronger." True freshman Wes Lunt returned as the Cowboys' starting quarterback last week in a 36-14 win over TCU, replacing J.W. Walsh who took over when Lunt suffered a knee injury earlier in the year. Lunt threw for 324 yards against the Horned Frogs in his first start in six weeks. Snyder said approaching the Cowboys' offense differs on which quarterback is on the field, which isn't necessarily a good thing. "The downside to that is they both are awfully good. Both of them have tremendous numbers to support that," Snyder said. "It is not a matter of one of them having a great deal more experience than the other. It is just the idea that they are young, extremely quality quarterbacks." The Cowboys' receiving core is led by Josh Stewart, who has pulled in 48 receptions for 574 yards, and include four other players with at least 20 catches this season. A win on Saturday would be the first time Snyder has won a game against the Cowboys since his return to coaching.

Breaking down the game with David Ubben



Mark Kern
sports editor

K-State, ranked No. 2 in the country at 8-0, prepares to play host Saturday against the 5-2 Oklahoma State Cowboys. ESPN.com blogger David Ubben spoke to Collegian reporter Mark Kern over the phone to break down the battle for first place in the Big 12.

Q. How has the K-State team changed from last year?

A. "For one, K-State has just done what they did last year, they are just better. With Collin Klein, all of his statistics are up. There isn't quite as much talent as in the Big 12 top to bottom, and K-State is just better this year. They do everything right, and they are not going to beat themselves. That makes it very tough on opponents, knowing that you are going to have to play a very sound and complete football game to beat them."

Q. This game features the top two rushing attacks

in the Big 12. How are their rushing attacks different?

A. "They are different in the way they run the ball. With Oklahoma State, they are looking to throw the ball to help set up the rushing game of Joseph Randle. Dana Holgorsen started the offensive attack, and Todd Monken has done a great job of taking it to another level. With K-State, they are looking to run the ball to establish more of a short-style passing game. While they definitely are different in the way they run the ball, they are both very effective in the way they run the ball."

Q. What does Oklahoma State have to do to keep the game close and not let K-State wear the team out?

A. "You can't make mistakes against K-State. They have shown the past two years that they are not going to make them, and when you make those mistakes, they absolutely take advantage of them. You can look at the statistics, where K-State is near the tops in the country in least penalized, as well as turnover margin. That is a very good indicator of how good a team is. If the Cowboys can limit their mistakes, they have the talent to hang with the Wildcats."

Q. Does K-State need to keep winning big to keep teams behind them?

A. "It is weird, but K-State has blown out a lot of teams despite not being known to be an 'explosive' team. Coach Bill Snyder said in the Big 12 teleconference that he

does not know what a style point is. The thing with K-State is that they are through the real tough part of their schedule. While the remaining teams all on their schedule are talented and have the potential, they are teams K-State can't afford to beat in a close game. Teams like Notre Dame and Oregon, both have some golden opportunities to beat some very good teams, so the Wildcats need to make sure they take care of business.

Q. Where has Collin Klein improved most as a passer?

A. "I think it is a lot of what Bill Snyder says, he is diligent every day at getting better. He has an unorthodox throwing motion and he doesn't throw the ball a whole lot this year. He does a great job of not making the unnecessary throw, and instead going to the open guy and living to play another down. While his throwing motion is still not one to show on a throwing tape, he has adjusted to it and still makes some very good throws."

Q. How big of game is this for Oklahoma State?

A. "Obviously, with all of the players that they lost from last season, this was expected to be a rebuilding season. However, led by an explosive offense and an opportunistic defense, the Cowboys have stayed in Big 12 contention. With a win, they would be tied for first place in the conference, but it is going to take a very good effort to knock off a hungry Wildcat team at Bill Snyder Family Stadium."

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Week 10: Alabama loss could move K-State to No. 1

Mark Kern
sports editor



NO. 4 OREGON @ NO. 17 USC

This was supposed to be a huge game, but USC, despite a Pac-12-record 345 receiving yards from Marqise Lee, were upset by the Arizona Wildcats 39-36 in Tuscon last Saturday. Make no doubt about it though, this is still a monster game for Oregon, especially against the Trojans high-powered offense.

Led by preseason Heisman front-runner quarterback Matt Barkley, the Trojans have one of the nation's best passing attacks. With receivers Lee and Robert Woods, no other team in the country has a duo quite like theirs. While Oregon has a much-improved defense, it is still hard to imagine that they will be able to slow down this high-octane offense of the Trojans, so the Ducks will have to put up a lot of points to keep pace. Luckily for Oregon fans, they have the players to do it.

With Kenjon Barner and DeAnthony Thomas, there is not a faster duo in the country when it comes to straight speed. Barner, who was just known as LaMichael James' back up last season, has filled in nicely, rushing for 974 yards and 14 touchdowns, while averaging 6.9 yards per carry. Put those numbers with Thomas, who has 500 yards and seven touchdowns, on an incredible 8.6 yards per carry, and you have an offense that is nearly impossible to stop.

The key will be how freshman quarterback Marcus Mariota handles his toughest road test of his brief career.

Mariota has thrown 18 touchdowns to only five interceptions on the season, and has helped the Ducks have a balanced offensive attack. This will be a key as he goes up against a suspect Trojan defense.

Oregon has been getting jumped recently in the polls, and it has had their fans worried. However, the Ducks still control their own destiny, and will get the jump start they need with a convincing victory over USC to show the rest of the country what they are capable of.



NO. 1 ALABAMA @ NO. 18 LSU

In a game that was dubbed, "Game of the Century" last year, neither offense could do anything as LSU held on for the 9-6 overtime victory. The Crimson Tide got their revenge in the national championship, defeating LSU 21-0. Now, it is LSU's turn to defend home turf, and much like Oregon, jump right back into the national title race.

After a loss to Florida, the Tigers appeared to be in trouble. However, after back-to-back victories over South Carolina and Texas A&M, LSU has jumped right back into the race behind the legs of freshman running back Jeremy Hill.

Hill has rushed for 100 yards in back-to-back games, including 127 yards in the thrilling comeback victory over the Aggies in College Station, Texas. He has helped the LSU Tigers offense improve throughout the season, as they were really struggling early on. They will need another big performance from Hill, as they go up against a very tough Alabama team.

The Crimson Tide, widely considered to be the best team in the country, has steamrolled through their schedule thus far. However, they have not played a team of this magnitude, and AJ McCarron must continue his strong play at the quarterback position.

McCarron has not thrown an interception on the season, and has elevated his play from game manager to a guy that can go out and win a game for his team. Look for the LSU defense to really get after him and see if he can handle the pressure.

This is a huge game in both the SEC and national title races. If Alabama wins, they appear to have an easy path for the SEC championship game in Atlanta. However, if LSU wins, then they are in the drivers seat and the SEC's run of six-consecutive national champions is in serious jeopardy.

Quarterback Zach Mettenberger has not been consistent this season for LSU, and that will be the difference as Alabama wins a low-scoring affair.



NO. 23 TEXAS @ NO. 18 TEXAS TECH

Both teams are coming off bad performances, with the Red Raiders getting blitzed by K-State, while Texas had to score in the final seconds to avoid a huge upset in Lawrence. Once projected to be the best defense in the country, the Longhorns have really struggled to stop anybody, and that does not spell good news as they go up against an explosive Red Raider team.

Seth Doege is coming off a game that he would like to forget. However, he has had an outstanding year, throwing for 2,540 yards and 30 touchdowns, and he is a big reason why the Red Raiders could land in the Cotton Bowl.

With receivers like Alex Torres and Eric Ward, the Red Raiders are capable of moving the ball down the field at a rapid pace, and the best way to limit that for Texas may be to effectively run the ball.

Behind Malcolm Brown, Johnathan Gray and Joe Bergeron, the Longhorns have a three-headed monster that is capable of running the ball against anyone. They must have an effective day to take the pressure off quarterback David Ash, who has been really struggling as of late.

The Red Raiders are a tough team to figure out. Some days they can look very good, and other days they can look not so good. In this case, they are going up against a desperate Texas team looking for a win, and look for Mack Brown's boys to tough out the victory on the road.



UPSET OF THE WEEK: PITTSBURGH OVER NO. 3 NOTRE DAME

The Fighting Irish are coming off a huge victory in Norman over Oklahoma, and are starting to play some great football.

However, Notre Dame has struggled against lesser teams, as two unranked teams, Purdue and BYU, fell to Notre Dame by only three points.

These two teams did not have what Pittsburgh does, and that is a big-time running back in Ray Graham.

Graham has rushed for over 200 yards three times in his career, including 277 yards two seasons ago against Florida International. If the Panthers are going to be able to pull the upset, Graham will need to have another monster game against a very tough defense. However, it is the offense of the Fighting Irish that leaves them ripe for the upset.

Notre Dame has struggled on offense, especially through the air. Everett Golson continues to improve as a quarterback, but the offense has to improve quickly if they want to be a national title contender.

The last two games have been decided by nine total points, and even though Notre Dame has won both of them, they have not had the pressure that they do going into this game.

In the end, the pressure will be too much, as Graham goes for over 150 yards and leads the Panthers to a 17-13 upset in South Bend.

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MATCHING
UP





Tommy Theis | Collegian
Arthur Brown, senior linebacker, awaits the snap from Oklahoma quarterback Landry Jones in the Wildcats' 24-19 victory on Sept. 22 in Norman, Okla.



Jackie Dobson | The Daily O'Collegian
Oklahoma State freshman quarterback Wes Lunt hands off to junior running back Joseph Randle against TCU last Saturday in Boone Pickens Stadium in Stillwater, Okla.

Mark Kern
sports editor

Oklahoma State
rushing offense
vs. K-State rushing
defense

The Cowboys have the second-ranked rushing attack in the Big 12 Conference, behind the K-State Wildcats. However, the Cowboys do it more with straight speed rather than with the power attack of K-State. With Joseph Randle, who has 891 yards and nine touchdowns on the season, leading the attack, the Cowboys are able to turn a short run into a long touchdown at any give position. This speed will test a K-State defense that is one of the fastest in the country and can get to the ball in a hurry. Led by Arthur Brown, the Wildcats only give up 101 yards per game, good for 14th best in the country. This is a matchup that could have a major influence in the game, and both teams need to win this battle to help them win the game. In the end, the Cowboys running game is built off

speed. Unfortunately for them, speed is the Wildcats' strength on defense. Even though the Cowboys will make some big plays, look for K-State to hit Randle enough times and to slow down rushing the attack. Advantage: K-State

K-State rushing
offense vs.
Oklahoma State
rushing defense

The Wildcats' bread and butter on offense is the way they run the ball, and they do it as well as any team in the country. With Collin Klein and John Hubert anchoring the 17th-ranked rushing attack in the country (at 228.8 yards per game), the Wildcats' flat run over teams. The passing attack of Klein in recent games has forced defenses to not be able to load the box, making them nearly impossible to stop. Much like their offense, the Oklahoma State defense relies on their speed. They are looking to force turnovers on any play, something that K-State has not done very much on the season. No team has been able to

slow the Wildcats down from running the ball, and it is unlikely that the Cowboys will be able to slow down the rushing attack. Advantage: K-State

Oklahoma State
pass offense vs.
K-State pass
defense

Last season, the Cowboys had an extremely potent passing game with Brandon Weeden and Justin Blackmon. This season, they are both in the NFL as first-round draft picks. However, as Mike Gundy has proven, he has more weapons to throw the ball to, and this year Josh Stewart has proven to be a big-time player. Stewart, with 48 catches and 574 yards, is not quite the typical Oklahoma State receiver, but he is every bit as effective. Stewart is a small receiver that will take a short pass and turn it into a big play. As has been the case this season, tackling in the secondary will be huge. The Wildcats' secondary, led by Ty Zimmerman, gave up 502 passing yards last year to Okla-

homa State, and will be looking for revenge. This season, the Wildcats have done a much better job against the pass, due in large part to the fact that they are tackling very well. Oklahoma State is going to rely on a huge rushing game from Randle, so expect the Wildcats to load up the box and force the Cowboys to throw. Zimmerman has four interceptions on the season, and look for safety Jarard Milo, who has been very close the past couple weeks, get his first career interception. Advantage: K-State

K-State passing
offense vs.
Oklahoma State
passing defense

At the beginning of the season, this would have been an interesting topic as K-State was not expected to pass the ball efficiently. However, in the past two weeks they have been moving the ball through the air as well as they are on the ground. Besides the obvious improvement of Collin Klein, the wide receivers do an outstand-

ing job of getting open for their quarterback. With Tyler Lockett going deep, and Tramaine Thompson and Chis Harper controlling the middle of the field, they are able to attack anywhere on the field. Oklahoma State is still going to try and force Klein to throw the ball, and that could be a danger to the Cowboys' chances. Advantage: K-State

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Nick Davis
staff writer

This week’s “NCAA Football 13” game simulation has the No. 24 Oklahoma State Cowboys visiting the Little Apple to take on the undefeated No. 2 K-State Wildcats. Can Oklahoma State’s air raid offense pull off the upset and spoil K-State’s national title hopes? Or will the Wildcats rise to the occasion yet again? Let’s take a look at the simulation results of this matchup between two teams at the top of the Big 12 Conference standings.

1st Quarter - Oklahoma State wins the toss and chooses to kick to K-State to begin the game. Each team goes three-and-out before the Wildcats get rolling on their second possession. Collin Klein hits Chris Harper for a 20-yard completion, setting up a 3-yard touchdown run by John Hubert and moving the score to 7-0. Another Oklahoma State punt gives K-State great field position, and a 12-yard reception by Tramaine Thompson from

Klein puts the Wildcats up two touchdowns. However, quarterback Wes Lunt drives OSU down the field and connects with Isaiah Anderson on a 20-yard touchdown pass, ending the quarter 14-7, K-State.

2nd Quarter - Klein connects on a screen pass to Hubert, and he turns it into an 87-yard touchdown. Wildcats up two scores. Anthony Cantele hits a 30-yard field goal to give K-State a 24-7 lead. The offenses get going with both teams trading two more touchdowns to take the lead into the half with a score of 38-21.

3rd Quarter - The teams continue to trade touchdowns, until a K-State stop gives Klein the ball with a 45-28 lead. An 8-yard touchdown pass to Harper extends K-State’s lead to 52-28. Lunt responds with a 10-yard touchdown pass to Josh Stewart but Oklahoma State fails the two-point attempt, giving K-State the lead, 52-34. K-State punts on their next possession and Oklahoma State con-

verts a 53-yard field goal by Quinn Sharp to cut the K-State lead to 52-37.

4th Quarter — The Wildcats defenses cranks up their play with Ty Zimmerman and Arthur Brown intercepting Lunt on back-to-back possessions. Unable to get anything going on the offense, K-State allows Oklahoma State to hang in the game. Down 10 with the ball, Joseph Randle fumbles the ball after being a hit, and a Cantele field goal gives the final score of 65-52.

Player of the Game - Collin Klein — Klein completed 34 of 46 passes, amassing 628 yards with 5 touchdowns. He had 66 yards and a touchdown running the ball.

Play of the Game - Klein’s 77-yard touchdown pass to Torell Miller — a picture-perfect pass split the two defensive backs and Miller caught it in stride and ran 40 yards to the end zone.

Willie’s pushups - 414 pushups



screenshot of “NCAA Football13”

Oklahoma State football program has new players, puts up same results

Nicolas Wahl
staff writer

You hear the phrase all the time: “they don’t rebuild, they reload.” It’s something that comes with the transition from being a good team or having a quality season or two to becoming a legitimate “program.” Such a program will be visiting Bill Snyder Family Stadium on Saturday as Oklahoma State head coach Mike Gundy brings his No. 24-ranked Cowboys into Manhattan to face K-State. It isn’t something to sneeze at, and it isn’t something that many people probably thought likely in a place like Stillwater, Okla. Head coach Bill Snyder talks about how Gundy has made this a consistent team in all phases of the game.

“The thing about Oklahoma State is they are a tremendous-

ly balanced football team. They are up in the rankings in our conference in defense,” Snyder said. “Their specialists are as good as you can get. They rank high nationally in some facets of the kicking team. They rank high nationally in all aspects of offense. They have tremendous balance, and that has been brought upon, perhaps by, the improvement in each of those areas of their defense.”

When Gundy, a native Oklahoman and OSU alumni, took over as head coach in 2005, the seeds for success were already sown by his predecessor Les Miles, who left Stillwater for LSU the season before. Under Miles, and to a greater extent, Gundy, the Oklahoma State program has left behind a history littered with mediocre performance and transformed itself into what many believe is and will be a consistent con-

tender for Big 12 titles.

Under Gundy, Oklahoma State has a renewed commitment to football success. The team has increased its conference winning percentage every year since he took over. Support has grown dramatically in the form of monetary donations, particularly from a certain benefactor with deep pockets and who has his name on the stadium.

Boone Pickens Stadium, which the Cowboys call home, has been transformed from the hodge-podge of various erector-set like bleachers formerly known as Lewis Field into one of the finest facilities in college football. Last year the stadium witnessed what up to that point had been the culmination of that dedication. The Cowboys went 12-1, won the Big 12 title and the Fiesta Bowl, and were in the

driver’s seat for a berth in the national title game until they were upset by Iowa State in the second to last week of the season.

The Cowboys’ ascension has come, for the most part, on the back of a high-powered offense. They have averaged more than 40 points per game in four out of the last five seasons. That includes this season, in which OSU is averaging 44.3 points per game, just one-tenth of a point less than K-State, the Big 12 scoring leader.

The Cowboys’ championship run last season saw them light up scoreboards for 48.7 points a game. As a program that seemingly loses high-profile position players to the first round of the NFL Draft following every season, that, along with nearly 600 yards per game of total offense, speaks volumes to the consistency of

Gundy’s regime.

This season is no different. Despite losing quarterback Brandon Weeden and wide receiver Justin Blackmon, who are both starting in the NFL, the Cowboys continue to rack up yardage and score points at a blistering pace. They’re doing it with a combination of two talented freshman quarterbacks: J.W. Walsh and Wes Lunt.

Lunt, initial starter of the season before suffering a dislocated knee cap against Louisiana in the second week of the season, is a more traditional drop-back passer. Walsh, who is just as apt to make a play with his feet as his arm, took over and, despite a few transitional hiccups, has kept the course for the OSU offense. Walsh, however, was lost for the season in a win over Iowa State two weeks ago — a game

in which he threw for 415 yards. Not missing a beat, Lunt stepped in and threw for 324 yards and a touchdown in a 36-15 win over TCU last week.

Joseph Randle, the Big 12’s leading rusher, provides a balance that most of the high-scoring teams in the conference simply don’t possess, and both young quarterbacks are churning up defenses with the help of another talented Cowboys receiving corps. OSU is at the top in the Big 12, averaging 239 rushing yards per game to go along with nearly 350 passing.

There was a time when football in Oklahoma meant the Sooners. While the Sooner program is as good as it ever was, Oklahoma State is making it known that there will, for the foreseeable future, be two top-notch programs coming out of the Red Dirt State.

BCS poll

1. Alabama .9759	9. Florida State .5743	18. Texas Tech .3242
2. K-State .9400	10. Louisville .5661	19. Boise State .3123
3. Notre Dame .9147	11. Oregon State .5559	20. Nebraska .2568
4. Oregon .9136	12. Oklahoma .5454	21. West Virginia .2512
5. LSU .8163	13. Clemson .5095	22. Arizona .1692
6. Georgia .7753	14. Stanford .4863	23. Texas .1640
7. Florida .7604	15. Mississippi State .3913	24. Oklahoma State .0893
8. South Carolina .5968	16. Texas A&M .3593	25. Louisiana Tech .0784
	17. USC .3509	



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